

**REMARKS BY FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI  
AT THE DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WASHINGTON, DC**

**OCTOBER 16, 2017**

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank each of you for your participation in this committee and your hard work on its behalf. The Disability Advisory Committee has become an invaluable resource to the Commission, and is so important in ensuring equal access to communications for people with disabilities.

The Commission takes seriously its commitment to accessibility. Over the past year, the FCC has been busy implementing new rules, improving existing rules, and providing important information and assistance to advance communication access.

When I spoke to you in March, I noted that the Commission was about to vote on an order to improve VRS interoperability, quality, and efficiency. I am happy to say that this order has since been released, and we have made several other important strides since then.

As you know, one of our goals is to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the communications networks, including new or advanced technologies. And at our upcoming Commission meeting on October 24, we will vote on an order to apply hearing aid compatibility requirements to wireline phones using Voice over Internet Protocol. The order also would require volume control on cell phones – something the community has requested for over a decade. This would help ensure that people using hearing aids—as well as those without such aids – are better able to select cell phones that meet their communication needs. In particular, this is sure to benefit our growing population of seniors.

In order to expand direct communications for deaf callers, we also are continuing our efforts to educate government agencies on the federal, state and local levels about Direct Video Calling. The ability to call direct, rather than through a third party, ensures better accuracy, privacy, and call efficiency. In addition to pointing out the accessibility benefits of this valuable service, we go the extra mile in providing valuable technical guidance on how these government entities can provide Direct Video Calling within their individual call center environments.

Finally, people who are blind or visually impaired are gaining better access to television, program guides, and menus because of the Commission's accessible user interface rules, which went into effect just this past December. And because of the new video description rules that the Commission adopted in July, people who are blind or visually impaired will be able to access a lot more television programming beginning July of 2018. These rules expand the required amount of video description that each of the covered broadcast and non-broadcast networks must air by 75%, the maximum allowed by the CVAA.

I understand that today you will be considering important recommendations on how to accelerate the integration of real-time text by public safety answering points, on the challenges of

supporting compatibility between real-time text and refreshable Braille displays, and on metrics to ensure high quality IP captioned telephone relay services.

I want to thank the subcommittees for all your efforts to bring these recommendations to the full committee. I look forward to learning more about these recommendations, and others to come, as we work together to continue improving accessibility in 21<sup>st</sup> century communications.